

Therefore, I, TERRI SEWELL, Representative to the United States Congress from the Seventh District of Alabama, do hereby recognize Mr. Fred D. Williams III for his numerous contributions to the City of Selma, Alabama. I ask those present today to join me in honoring Fred D. Williams III for his retirement and commending him for his many achievements on behalf of the State of Alabama.

THE DEBT CEILING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WOODALL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I came to the House floor today to talk about the big deal. Every time I open up a newspaper, Mr. Speaker, this week it's been talking about the big deal, the big deal that's going on at the White House.

I want to set the record straight here today. The big deal happened right here on the floor of this House, when the only budget that's passed in all of Washington, D.C., all year long, cutting \$6 trillion in spending, was passed by this body, Mr. Speaker. That's the big deal—\$6 trillion agreed upon by this United States House of Representatives. Now, I know down at the White House they are talking about the big deal is 3 trillion in spending cuts, 6 trillion, Mr. Speaker. The big deal started right here now.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I am a big fan of the open process that we have had in this House where every single Member of the United States House of Representatives come here and have their voices heard, offer their ideas, offer their opinions, and that happened in our voting process, Mr. Speaker.

I have a vote tally here from that week of voting on the budget. The Congressional Black Caucus budget came to the floor of this House, was debated, considered. It received 103 affirmative votes, 103. The Republican Study Committee budget came, debated in this House, 119 affirmative budgets. The Progressive Caucus budget came, 77 affirmative votes. Congressman VAN HOLLEN brought a Democratic alternative, 166 affirmative votes.

The only budget to get 218 votes, Mr. Speaker, was the House Budget Committee budget with 235 "yes" votes, 235. Now, that's a budget that was laid out line item by line item by line item, so absolutely everyone in America could see what it was that we were doing to achieve these savings to change the direction of our borrowing and our spending.

Now, no one even introduced the President's budget in this body, Mr. Speaker. No one offered it. Now the Senate brought the President's budget to a vote, and it was defeated 0-97. The United States Senate, Mr. Speaker, defeated the President's budget 0-97.

Now, they brought the House-passed budget up over there. They couldn't pass that either. It received 40 affirma-

tive votes, but they still couldn't pass the budget. As my colleague said earlier, it's been over 800 days since the Senate has passed a budget.

Now, I know the President has come back out and he has talked about some alternatives, some things he would do differently from the budget that he offered in February, differently from that budget that got zero votes in the Senate. And in a Budget Committee hearing the other day, we asked the Congressional Budget Office Director what's the score on the President's new plan. And the office told us, Mr. Speaker, that they can't score a speech. I think that's true.

There is a lot of talk in this town, but there is a not a lot of line item by line item by line item putting your name, your money, and your vote by where your priorities are. But this House did it, Mr. Speaker. We are the only body in town to do it. It's the only budget in town to pass and it's the big deal, \$6 trillion over 10 years to help try to get this country back on track.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, it did it by not cutting one penny from the benefits that seniors are receiving today, not one, so that seniors, even those over 55, Mr. Speaker, would continue to receive the same Medicare program that seniors are receiving today; so those over 55 would receive the same Social Security benefits as those folks who are receiving those benefits today. I cannot believe, when I open up the front page of the newspaper, I hear folks talking about Social Security benefits might not go out the door, veterans benefits might not go out the door.

Mr. Speaker, we have a plan that this body passed that gets those checks out the door. It is responsible in that it cut \$6 trillion in spending. It is responsible in that it bends the budget curve going forward over the next 10 years and it gets those checks out the door.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know what's going to happen over the next 3 weeks. I don't know where this town is going to go. This town is a tough town to predict. But I know that this House has put its mark in the sand. This House has brought every single Budget Committee alternative that was offered to this floor. We voted on each and every one, and the only one to pass this House was the big deal, \$6 trillion, and it gets our seniors and our troops paid on August 3.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to rally around that and let's give the American people what they deserve, and that's some certainty in the budget process.

□ 1040

THE UNEMPLOYED

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, my colleagues, as we have the opportunity to

debate whether or not our brave young men and women are fighting in wars in foreign lands that have not been approved by the Congress, as we talk in terms of trillions of dollars as to the national debt that we have acquired and think of ways that we can reduce it, and as we look at our revenue code and recognize that it is just so totally unfair and should be reformed and revamped, millions of people have awakened this morning unable to really consider these important issues because they are without work. Millions of people have lost their self-esteem, have lost their jobs, and some have lost their health insurance. Many have lost their homes, others have pulled their kids out of college, cars have been lost for inability to pay, and creditors have been just nightmares to them.

Included in this vast amount of people are African Americans, many who have served this country, hardworking people that find themselves not at the 9.2 so-called unemployment rate but at a 16 percent unemployment rate. And this doesn't take into account the millions of people, and especially African Americans, that know that there are no jobs for them. And to be going to the unemployment office just to be counted among the faceless unemployed doesn't make sense.

Included among them are veterans that have fought for this country. Some have come home with physical and mental problems, but they have not received the support or the transitional aid that's necessary for them to assimilate in a work market that has no jobs. So many of these people have worked in local establishments, in our butcher shops, our cleaners and our shoe repair, and they are without work. So many of them are women that have toiled and raised their families without the assistance of anyone else, and they too are without work and without hope.

As we think about these people and think about reduction of our spending, we find that Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security seems to be constantly referred to as entitlements, and people talk about that it has to be protected. So many mayors and Governors are talking about how they too have to cut their budgets. And so many African Americans, for reasons that I do not have to go into, have sought public service as a way of life because of the security that's involved in it. And so when we talk about cutting the budget and cutting the services that are provided, we're talking about a larger number of minorities that will be losing their jobs as a result of budget cutting, whether we're talking about teachers or policemen or clerks that work in the city halls or the communities that have Governors that have slashed back their jobs, but certainly as we talk about Medicaid and Medicare, we're talking about hospitals. And all of you know, no matter where you come from, that you see a large number of African Americans working

in these institutions trying to get an education to move forward because we know of the large number of health care providers that we need.

We are proud in the city of New York to say that we have been able to train and educate a larger percentage of physicians than all of the teaching hospitals that we have throughout our great country, and we're proud to do that. All of a sudden, we hear that some \$300 billion will be cut from the hospitals that provide this care. And it's not just by the beneficiaries that you and I know they need this care and they will be put in harm's way, but also we have to acknowledge that many of the people that work in these hospitals, a large number of them being minorities, they too will be released to join the unemployed.

So while I'm praying for our spiritual leaders to protect the vulnerable, please understand that every time we make a cut in the budget, we're cutting someone's job, and they will join the hopeless and the unemployed.

OPPOSING THE COLOMBIA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my ongoing concerns about human rights abuses in Colombia and to oppose any consideration of the pending United States-Colombia Free Trade Agreement until tangible and sustained progress is seen on the ground. Colombia has a longstanding legacy of serious and pervasive human rights violations. Trade unionists, members of indigenous groups, and human rights defenders have been particular targets for violence. Despite some positive rhetoric by the Santos administration about improving protection of human rights, serious abuses continue.

In one recent incident reported by Human Rights Watch, seven people were massacred in southern Colombia on July 2, reportedly by FARC guerrillas. On June 25, another eight people were killed also in the southern part of the country. In both cases, children were among those killed. According to Human Rights Watch, there were 17 such massacres between January and May, 2011, resulting in a total of 76 deaths—a 21 percent increase over the same time period in 2010.

Several members of indigenous groups have been targeted and killed in recent weeks as well, ranging from children to prominent community leaders. Human Rights Watch reports that 14 members of indigenous communities have been killed in 2011 in Antioquia Department alone. Other indigenous leaders have been threatened, and dozens of families have been displaced. The Colombian Government has to act immediately to ensure a thorough investigation into these horrific

crimes and to finally end the cycle of impunity. Further, the government must take immediate steps to protect indigenous communities and other particularly vulnerable groups, as human rights groups have repeatedly demanded.

Labor leaders and trade unionists also continue to be victims of serious abuses. Though the recently agreed to Labor Action Plan commits the government, at least in writing, to take several important steps to prevent and punish these human rights violations, we have yet to see any sort of tangible progress on the ground. With recently published statistics showing that Colombia again led the world in trade unionist deaths in 2010, it is critical that we see a real reduction in violence before we even consider passing and implementing a trade deal.

The Labor Action Plan is not legally binding under the FTA before us. If violence and impunity continue, the United States will have no mechanism for delaying or halting implementation of the free trade agreement. The Labor Action Plan fails to require sustained, meaningful and measurable results. Once we enact the FTA, we lose any ability to force the Colombian Government to produce tangible change.

Mr. Speaker, I do not support the NAFTA-style trade model illustrated in the three pending Bush-negotiated free trade agreements because so-called free trade has proven destructive to the American economy and harmful to workers both in the United States and abroad. The Economic Policy Institute estimates that implementing the Colombia and South Korea free trade agreements would increase the U.S. trade deficit by \$16.8 billion and eliminate or displace 214,000 U.S. jobs. Particularly at a time when we should be focused on job creation, I strongly oppose all three FTAs, which jeopardize more jobs.

□ 1050

Finally, I find it particularly concerning that we are considering implementing an FTA with Colombia in the absence of demonstrated progress on human rights and workers rights.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot turn a blind eye to ongoing abuses, and we should not consider the trade agreement until these issues are fully resolved.

COLOMBIAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ) for 5 minutes.

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to address the House and the American people regarding the Colombia free trade agreement and the negative impacts it will have on working families in the United States as well as Colombia.

Quite frankly, I am stumped as to why Congress is even considering this

trade agreement. Colombia is the most dangerous place in the world to be a union worker. This year, 17 trade unionists were assassinated as of mid-June. Last year, 51 trade unionists were killed in Colombia.

As a Member of Congress, I have traveled to Colombia to see labor conditions there firsthand. We simply can't afford to approve an FTA with a nation as unsafe as Colombia which can't even enforce its own laws.

Like many of my colleagues, I was glad to see that the Obama administration negotiated a Labor Action Plan with the Colombian Government. Both morally and economically, it is imperative that Colombia address some of these concerns regarding human and labor rights for workers. The administration says the Labor Action Plan has been met. The problem is that the Labor Action Plan doesn't go far enough.

Many of my colleagues might question whether labor conditions in a foreign country could really impact job prospects of their constituents here in the United States. Well, when you consider that for years American workers have been competing for jobs with nations that have weaker labor and environmental standards, it is no wonder that we are losing jobs here in the United States.

Let me be blunt: if joining a union means putting your life on the line, there is no freedom. There is no fair competition. Without fair competition, we will see even more American jobs shipped overseas. I think we can all agree that the last thing that this country needs right now is to lose more jobs.

Let me be clear. I am committed to trade. Trade can benefit our Nation, our businesses, and our working families. In fact, I am a member of President Obama's Export Council, and the goal there is to double American exports in 5 years, not to export American jobs.

The fact of the matter is that the Colombia free trade agreement doesn't help American working families. It really benefits transnational corporations. These transnational corporations already repress Colombian workers. Nothing under this agreement makes the lives of Colombian workers better. Nothing under this agreement makes the lives of U.S. workers better. They don't get an equal share of the benefits of this free trade agreement.

Why are we rushing to approve an agreement when workers in Colombia don't even want it? Even worse, once the agreement is in effect, the U.S. loses our most important leverage to see that the human rights situation improves in Colombia. So I ask again: why the rush?

Congress should wait to see if Colombia institutes the Labor Action Plan, as they have promised. After that, we can determine if conditions for working families in Colombia actually improve. The Labor Action Plan is a good